

EAC MINUTES

Dickinson Township Environmental Advisory Council

June 2, 2026, Dickinson Township Meeting Room

4:02 pm

Attendance

Council Members:

Chairman Nate Merkel, Vice Chairperson Jennifer DeGaetano, Jared Abell

Staff:

Jill Lovett, Township Manager, Grace Hogue, Secretary/Treasurer, Glenn Kelso, Public Works Director, Ryan Hoover, Zoning/Codes Enforcement Officer, Matthew Boyer, Solicitor

Visitors:

*Reed Rusniak – 753 Burnt House Road
Sandie Brandner – 50 Monstera Road
Jodie Williford – 272 Stuart Road*

Call to Order

Chairman Merkel called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Announcements

- a. Reminder that Dickinson Township is seeking volunteers for several open positions (Alternate on Zoning Hearing Board, Planning Commission and Environmental Advisory Council) on various Boards and Committees. If interested, please contact Jill Lovett at manager@dickinsontownship.org if you are interested.
- b. Dickinson Township is asking residents to sign up for its mass text alert system. This system is used to alert residents of things such as emergency situations, road closures, trash delays, etc. To sign up please go to the Township website and click on the image where it says Mass Text Alert Signup. Fill out the form online and hit submit.
- c. A reminder that more information about our community can be found on our website at www.dickinsontownship.org

Agenda Approval

A motion was made to approve the agenda for the June 2, 2026 meeting by Vice Chairperson DeGaetano. It was seconded by Jared Abell and passed unanimously.

Minutes Approval

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for the March 31, 2026 meeting by Vice Chairperson DeGaetano. It was seconded by Jared Abell and passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Merkel announced, due to personal growing commitments, he has submitted his resignation from the Environmental Advisory Council. He expressed his appreciation of the Board of Supervisors especially Vice Chairperson DeGaetano, Township Manager and staff as well as the participation of the residents. He provided encouragement to the EAC members as they move forward.

Manager Lovett explained there will be a resolution provided to the Board of Supervisor's next meeting to nominate Mark Hockley to the Environmental Advisory Council as a new member. The resolution also announces the chairperson as Jared Abell if the Board wishes to approve it. She expressed her appreciation of Chairman Merkel and his many years of service and participation for the various Township committees.

Visitors/Public Comment

Reed Rusniak – 753 Burnt House Road – Mr. Rusniak stated how the Food Processing Residuals (FPR) issues are near his property and continue to cause concerns within the environment and water supply. He asked what steps could be taken to correct these issues, as well as questioning whether studies have been done to look further into the water supply problems and how he can stay informed. Chairman Merkel restated some information from the EAC's first meeting where they discussed the action steps to reach out to institutions to ask if they would be interested in assisting with a study. There is a draft letter on the agenda for the current meeting to approve to provide to these institutions. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano reported there is movement on the FPR bills that are currently sitting in the Senate that will regulate FPRs and haulers of FPRs. She confirmed there are resident inquiries to get studies done, specifically water testing, on the wells within the Township. She stated for ground water testing, it is difficult to test since it is unknown what to test for; however, partnering with institutions to perform these studies could determine the testing attributes. She provided information on how to access updates and contact the Township staff and herself. Mr. Rusniak mentioned he has been in touch with Representative Barbara Gleim's office to receive information on how to get these FPRs banned. Jared Abell shared this Council is only having its second meeting and the water and air quality concerns within the Township are the main reason this Council was created.

Sandie Brandner – 50 Montsera Road – Ms. Brandner explained she remembered a water study was done a while ago but there were not many residents who showed up at this testing. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano shared there aren't any details that are provided from those tests. She shared the studies through the institutions would be beneficial and a good next step.

New Business - None

Old Business

a. Continued Discussion regarding EAC matters

The Council reviewed and discussed the draft letter to send to institutional partners, such as universities and other entities to engage in a comprehensive environmental study. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano stated the draft letter captured what they are attempting to communicate, however she believes air quality should be included. Chairman Merkel agreed. There was further discussion on how this letter will assist with getting the study going and getting the word out with more information about FPRs. Jared Abell mentioned reaching out to other statewide EACs might be beneficial.

Chairman Merkel asked Solicitor Boyer if after a study that proves adverse effect to the environment, would it provide justification to adopt an ordinance to provide limitations of FPRs. Solicitor Boyer stated it would not be a possibility, due to the spreading FPRs being considered a normal farming practice currently. Vice

Chairperson DeGaetano that the current pending legislation does have an amendment has not been completed. She encouraged residents to file complaints more now than ever as they are important for legislation to see the volume of issues. Chairman Merkel stated how the process may seem at a standstill, but we are moving further than we have been able to in the past couple years, and with the more complaints received and this letter are the next big steps to encourage results on these issues. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano shared her discussions with Senator Rothman's office who encouraged residents to email their office after the DEP complaint is filed. His office understands the difficulty of the filing these complaints with DEP and his office will follow up on these complaints to ensure the agency is following through. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano mentioned the best form of communicating this option is to provide Senator Rothman's contact information in the next township newsletter. Chairman Merkel stated by sharing all of this in the newsletter, and the multiple steps and notifications to file a complaint will reach every resident in the Township. Jared Abell stated it's encouraging to hear Senator Rothman's office is supportive and the bills are moving through the Senate. The only way this will continue to move is the constant complaints received.

Chairman Merkel established a timeline to have the council review the paragraph on air quality to include in the letter and then send the letter out to institutions by the end of the month. Jared Abell mentioned adding this paragraph could broaden the contacts to something in case it's more specific what someone is looking to help with the study. Manager Lovett stated Grace Hogue has a contact list to send this letter to multiple institutions. He also encouraged residents to perform their own water testing to establish a basis level.

Chairman Merkel made a motion to conditionally approve the letter with the inclusion of the air quality paragraph, in order to be provided to intuitional education facilities for environmental studies related to effects of FPRs within the Township. Vice Chairperson DeGaetano seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

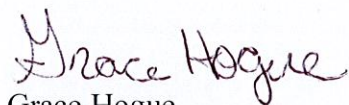
Closing Announcements

Jared Abell shared he will be attending a We Conserve PA panel on the formation of EACs across the state, which he will report on at an upcoming meeting. He also mentioned there is a statewide water quality testing for the larger aquafer system and relates to pesticides that will be taking place and he plans to participate in it.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson DeGaetano and seconded by Jared Abell and passed unanimously to adjourn at 4:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Grace Hogue
Secretary/Treasurer

